



4. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

- AmeriCorps Member Training and Benefits Checklist
- Sample Member Training Plan
- Top Ten Tips on Member Development
- Individual Development Plan Worksheet Sample
- Stages of Group Development for AmeriCorps Programs
- Exploring The Five Stages of Group Formation
- Life After AmeriCorps Resources
- Civil Rights / Equal Opportunity Requirements
- Grant Program Civil Rights and Non-Harassment Policy
- ACCESS AmeriCorps
 - 25 Tips for Facilitating Disability Inclusion in Your Program
 - Volunteer Tennessee Disability Inclusion Policy
 - Tennessee AmeriCorps Disability Disclosure Form Sample
 - Reasonable Accommodations and the Law



AmeriCorps Member Training and Benefits Checklist

Required Training

Pre-Service

- Training relevant to field of service
- Background info on community served
- Orientation that enhances member security and sensitivity to the community. Include these topics in member contract:
 - Member rights and responsibilities
 - Standards of Conduct
 - Prohibited Activities
 - Requirements under the Drug Free Workplace Act
 - Suspension and termination from service
 - Grievance procedures
 - HR/Organizational/Program Trainings
 - Other non-discrimination issues
 - Other topics as necessary

In-Service

- Structured opportunities for reflection on service activities

Recommended Member Training

Pre-Service

- AmeriCorps 101:
 - History of Service in America
 - The AmeriCorps Network
 - Ethic of service
- Performance measures and how to collect data
- Program operating policies
 - Living allowance
 - Benefits (see below)
 - Timesheets (signed by member AND supervisor)
 - Making up missed service hours
 - Safety protocol
 - Travel Policies
 - Expense reimbursement
- Staff and member roles (Volunteer-Member-Staff Exercise: Training Handbook)
- Recruiting and supervising volunteers
- Diversity and cross-cultural sensitivity
- Sexual Harassment
- Teambuilding (do throughout program year)
- CPR/First Aid (and other Disaster Preparedness and Response)
- Volunteer TN Statewide Events info/ Esprit de Corps

In-Service

- Citizenship training (see resource sheet)
- Conflict Resolution
- Financial Management
- Life After AmeriCorps
 - Goal setting
 - Resume Writing
 - Job searching/interview skills (etc.)
- Effective Communication
- Accommodation of Persons with disabilities
- Stages of Group Dynamics
- Personality Styles/work Styles
- ***Member Recognition

Required Member Benefits

In-service

- Living allowance— (Required for full-time only)
 - Paid in regular increments only during period of service
- Health care coverage— (full-time only and half-time serving in full-time capacity)
- Childcare—(full-time only, income requirements)
- Occupational accidental death and dismemberment insurance— (Worker's Comp)
- Family and Medical Leave
- Member service gear
- Time to Vote
- Credit for jury duty— (credit for normal service hours only)
- Credit for armed forces reserves two-week activity duty— (Credit for normal service hours only and only if can't be scheduled when it won't disrupt AmeriCorps service. No credit for once-a-month weekend service.)
- Reasonable accommodation—(member must disclose disability and request accommodation)

Post-Service

- Segal AmeriCorps Education Award— (Pending on successful completion of the program)

Other Available Benefits

In-Service

- Food stamps (income dependent)
- Student loan forbearance for qualified loans (member must request forbearance)

Post-Service

- Education award info, including matching of education award at certain colleges and universities —
 - www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps/segal-amicorps-education-award
- Student loan interest accrual payment— (member must submit interest payment form)
- Alumni network (www.americorpsalums.org)

Tennessee AmeriCorps Program Member Training Plan



Training Goals

- AmeriCorps members will have the skills necessary to fulfill the duties outlined in their service position descriptions.
- Members will gain a larger awareness of issues in our community and learn ways to alleviate these problems.
- Members will enhance their commitment to civic engagement.

Training Objectives

Through monthly/weekly trainings, optional professional development workshops, completion of individual personal growth plans and required member training, *The Tennessee AmeriCorps Programs'* AmeriCorps members will:

- Learn the skills necessary to serve the youth in our community
- Learn how to serve within an effective team
- Develop leadership skills by facilitating meetings/ trainings
- Be able to recruit 10 volunteers each into their service projects
- Learn how to gather the resources needed for their service
- Become a greater advocate for disadvantaged youth

Developed from <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/member-and-volunteer-development/encorps/designing-effective-training>

Training Calendar

DATE **# Hours** **Training type**

September

September 4	7 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome/Icebreaker • AmeriCorps 101 • Program Mission and History • Service Description • Teambuilder • Orientation that enhances member security and sensitivity to the community • Member contract: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Member rights and responsibilities ○ Standards of Conduct ○ Prohibited Activities ○ Requirements under the Drug Free Workplace Act ○ Suspension and termination from service ○ Grievance procedures ○ Sexual Harassment ○ Other non-discrimination issues
September 6	7 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome/Icebreaker • Prohibited and Allowable Activities Exercise • Community Tour • Teambuilder • Training relevant to field of service • Background info on community served
September 7	7 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Icebreaker • Understanding cultural dynamics that impact the community • Mentoring training • Timesheets • Lessons from the Returnees • Leadership styles
September 7	7 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Icebreaker

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting • Teambuilder • Statewide Service Days • Member Accountability
September 8	7 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Icebreaker • Service site tours • Individual service training • Member/Staff roles (worksheet) • Team meeting • Review (Team Jeopardy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allowable and prohibited activities - Timesheet race - Paperwork
Month Total	35 hrs	

October

October 6	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team meeting • Service Reflection
October 13	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Recruitment
October 20	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member goal/development plan
October: TBD	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual member development training: TBD
Month Total	16 hrs	

Training Calendar

DATE	# Hours	Training type
November		
November 3	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPR
November 10	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aid
November 17	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Asset Mapping Exercise
November: TBD	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual member development training: TBD • Optional Trainings: Disaster Preparedness and Response (Red Cross) Resume Writing (Career Center)
Month Total	16 hrs	
December		
December 1	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Reflection
December 7	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Project Planning (from Community Asset mapping Exercise)
December 8	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation of Person with Disabilities
December: TBD	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual member development training: TBD • Optional Training: Visioning/Goal Setting
Month Total	16 hrs	
January		
January 5	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stages of Group Dynamics
January 12	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Communication
January 19	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with youth (Mentoring Team) • Volunteer Recruitment Part 2 (Community Partnership Team)

January: TBD	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual member development training: TBD
Month Total	16 hrs	

February

February 2	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Service Project Planning
February 9	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Retreat Planning
February 16	8 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Retreat
February: TBD	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual member development training: TBD
Month Total	20 hrs	

March

March 2	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Corps Service Project
March 9	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check-in Member Development Plans: Life After AmeriCorps goals
March 10	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Awareness (The IT Institute)
March TBD	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual member development training: TBD - Mid-Year Performance Reviews/Individual Check-ins
Month Total	16 hrs	

April

April 6	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Meeting: Reflection Journals
April 13	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizenship Service Project
April 20	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership 101
April: TBD	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life After AmeriCorps: Progress towards Goals
Month Total	16 hrs	

Training Calendar

DATE	# Hours	Training type
May		
May 4	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life After AmeriCorps: Career Center Visitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resume Help - Mock Interviews - Job searches
May 11	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Meeting: Reflection of Accomplishments
May 18	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life After AmeriCorps: How will I continue to serve?
May: TBD	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional: GED Practice Test, GRE Preparation course
Month Total	16 hrs	
June		
June 1	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Journaling
June 8	2 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection: These are a few of my favorites things (with friends and family)
June 15	8 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End of Term Reflection/ Celebration End of Term Reviews
Month Total	14 hrs	

Total Member Training Hours	181 X 15 Members = <u>2,715</u>
Total Member Service Hours	1700X 15 <u>25,500</u>
% 20 of Service Hours	<u>5,100</u>

SAMPLE

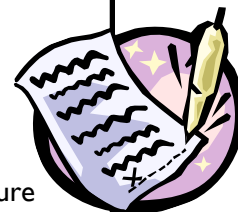
- Top Ten Tips on Member Development - recruit, train, supervise



Establish Member Service Descriptions

Develop member service descriptions that describe the duties associated with the positions and states the skills needed.

- ◆ Review the AmeriCorps Ed Awards Program Application Guidelines so that your service descriptions reflect the basic AmeriCorps membership requirements.
- ◆ Write service descriptions that describe the positions in rewarding and interesting terms.
- ◆ Review the service descriptions with your staff to solicit input for improvements and to ensure that there is a clear understanding throughout the agency of what is expected of members.



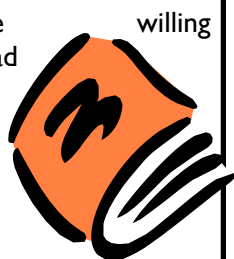
Develop a Recruitment Strategy

- ◆ Decide who your best potential members are by thinking about who would want the job:
 - ⇒ who would be interested in the mission of your program?
 - ⇒ who is likely to have time available during the hours that the service is performed?
 - ⇒ who can fulfill the time commitment of the service requirement over the course of the service term?
- ◆ Know how many hours per week are needed to meet the service requirement and make this clear to potential members.
- ◆ Involve everyone on your staff in the recruitment effort by seeking their input on finding members.
- ◆ Identify agencies, organizations, churches and schools where you can target potential members.



Create Recruitment Materials

- ◆ Think about your audience when designing your recruitment materials. Design appealing and attention-grabbing recruitment materials such as flyers, brochures and print or radio ads.
- ◆ Be sure to state clearly the benefits of being an AmeriCorps member in your program!
- ◆ You may be able to enlist graphic designers or ad agencies to donate help designing and or printing materials.
- ◆ Newspapers and radio stations may be to provide you with free or low-cost ad space, as well.



Set Recruitment Goals

- ◆ Decide the who, what, when, and how of your recruitment.
- ◆ Set a target date for having the necessary number of members recruited, screened, and ready to serve. What do you have to do, who you have to call or visit, and how many places you will send recruitment information?
- ◆ Who can help you meet your recruitment goals-- chances are that supporters of your organization such as Board Members, volunteers and donors have some great ideas and resources for recruitment and would be willing to assist you.



Screening Potential Members

- ♦ Establish the criteria that you will use to accept or reject your AmeriCorps applicants. When considering potential members, determine whether or not the skills required by the service position match those of the applicant. Motivation for service, perseverance, ability to handle stress and willingness to learn are key traits you will want to know about. Often the simple question: "Tell me about yourself" provides you with a great deal of information about the applicant's traits.
- ♦ Be cautious about rejecting applicants based only on what you see on paper. Some of your applicants may not be able to describe themselves well in writing, while others may not convey all of their talents in an interview. It is helpful to have a variety of ways to assess skills the applicant may have developed in previous life and work experiences. You don't want to pass over a gem in the rough!
- ♦ An applicant's references may provide further insight on their abilities.
- ♦ At the interview, tell the applicant how soon they will know about their acceptance and the start date for your program. When you deny membership to an applicant, try to maintain them as a "friend" of your program. You may encourage them to apply for another AmeriCorps program in your community or to re-apply to your program when you have more sites developed, if appropriate. Keep a record of all correspondence and actions related to your recruitment efforts.



Consider A Group Interview Process

- ♦ Many times a group interview is more effective than a one-on-one; it gives you a broader picture of the applicant and their skills.
- ♦ An interview process that includes others in addition to yourself can be a great way to involve staff from your organization in your AmeriCorps program.
- ♦ Remember, the questions you ask each applicant should be the same.
- ♦ You need to be sure that the questions are not biased against race, age, religion, sexual orientation, etc. These questions are prohibited by federal law. If in doubt about a question that you are considering asking, confer with your human resources staff for information on fair interview practices.



Place Members

- ♦ Assigning members to the service activities that compliment their current skills, in addition to those that they want to develop, is the best retention insurance you have after effective screening.
- ♦ Have your site supervisors assist you with the placement.
- ♦ Personality fit or match is a subtle, yet significant, factor in making an appropriate placement.
- ♦ Get feedback from the members about their reaction to their first site visit. If there are negative interactions at the start, they will continue unless you find a way to resolve the problem immediately.
- ♦ Do everything possible to assure the placement is the right one for both the member and the site.

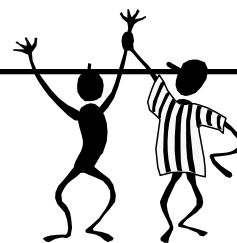


Orientation

- ♦ An effective orientation program is a must to get everyone off to a solid start. Get your staff involved in assisting with parts of the orientation related to their areas of expertise.
- ♦ Don't just orient your members, include your site supervisors in their own orientation and have a joint one for both members and site supervisors.
- ♦ The Corporation has excellent materials available to assist you with developing a thorough orientation program, such as the Program Director's Handbook, available on-line at: www.cns.gov/ameriCorps/resources/manuals.html. Also check out the National Service Resource Center website for member training resources at: <http://www.etr.org/NSRC>. The NSRC telephone number is 1-800-860-2684.



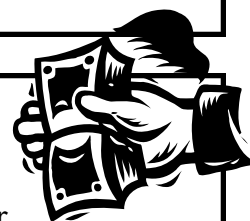
Train Members, Staff, and Site Supervisors



- ◆ On-going training and professional development is essential to the success of your program.
 - ◆ Assess the training needs of your members and staff, given the requirements of your service program and the training requirements for members stated in your AmeriCorps guidelines.
 - ◆ Establish a training and development plan to assure that your staff, your site supervisors, members, and you yourself continue to develop the skills necessary to make your service program a success.
- ⇒ Tap into the network of T/TA providers, such as CNVS, that the Corporation offers to AmeriCorps programs. Get to know what is available and how to utilize these resources. The National Service Resource Center is a training and technical assistance (T/TA) provider that provides resources on a range of topics including member training and development. Check out the NSRC materials at <http://www.etr.org/NSRC>.
- ⇒ Consider local resources when looking for trainers for the various sessions that you are planning. There are probably many people in your community who will voluntarily, or for a minimal stipend, assist you in providing specialized training in topics such as CPR, conflict resolution, listening skills, and career development.
- ⇒ Consider alternative forms of member and staff development such as video and audio training tapes, mentoring by community volunteers, and occasional shadowing of people on the job.



Developing Additional Funding Sources



- ◆ Because the Education Award comes after the AmeriCorps service, finding additional funding in order to offer incentives such as stipends, child care, bus fare and housing allowances can make your program more attractive to potential members and help ensure member retention.
 - ◆ Offering this type of assistance can increase the diversity of your members.
 - ◆ Potential sources of additional funding include grants, donations and fundraising events.
 - ◆ Community members, as well as staff and Board Members of your organization may be great sources for creative approaches to fundraising. Try some of these approaches:
- ⇒ Develop cooperative arrangements with Work-Study programs at the two and four year colleges in your area.
- ⇒ Seek corporate partnerships to provide scholarships, grants, or other gifts in-kind as fringe benefits for your recruits while they are AmeriCorps members.
- ⇒ Create liaisons with other federal, state, and local programs that offer stipends or financial incentives such as Welfare to Work programs.
- ⇒ Collaborate with other not-for-profit organizations in your area who may have sources of funding to offer members in return for work or service.
- ⇒ Work with other Corporation programs (Vista, Learn and Serve, Senior Corps) in your area to create child care cooperatives where members assist other members in caring for children and grandchildren.
- ⇒ Conduct a variety of fundraising events to create emergency funds that can be used for bus fare, housing allowances, gas, and food purchases, or other financial hardships your members may encounter. Some ideas are bake sales, raffles, tournaments, dances, music fests. (You will also have to develop criteria for how these funds are to be distributed to avoid abuse and mismanagement.)
- ⇒ Be creative. Don't let lack of funds prevent you from recruiting a potential member!!! There are many intangible benefits to AmeriCorps membership that can attract members!

**For more information, contact Nathalie Richardson, Project Coordinator at
Catholic Network of Volunteer Service, Training and Technical Assistance
4121 Harewood Road, NE Washington, DC Phone: (800) 543-5046 Fax: (202) 526-1094
Email: tta@cnvs.org**

Member Development and Management Resources

The following resources can provide further insight and information on the member development and management components of launching your AmeriCorps program. The materials are available on loan through the AmeriCorps training and technical assistance (T/TA) provider, the National Service Resource Center. The NSRC catalogue number for the materials follows each description. The NSRC can be reached at 1-800-860-2684. The NSRC can be reached on line at www.etr.org/NSCR or by e-mail at susan@etr-associates.org

AEAP Member and Site Supervisor Handbooks are attached for your convenience. These handbooks are excellent reference materials for the day-to-day requirements of managing AmeriCorps members and site supervisors. The handbooks provide information on issues such as regulations regarding member service and benefits, as well as site supervisor and host agency obligations.

101 Ideas for Volunteer Programs. McCurley, Steve and Sue Vineyard. Heritage Arts Publishing, Baltimore, MD 1986. Lists and checklists to consider for volunteer programs. Included are planning a volunteer program, recruiting volunteers and screening and training them, leadership characteristics, volunteer/staff relations, and marketing and public relations. # R0261.

School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action.

Epsterin, Joyce Levy, et al. Corwin Press, Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA 1997. 229 pages. Covers the process of planning, implementing, and maintaining a successful partnership between school, student's families, and the community. Describes six different types of involvement for partnership programs, including the challenges and likely results. # R0599

Secrets of Successful Grantsmanship: A Guerrilla Guide to Raising Money.

Golden, Susan L. Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco 1997. 165 pages. Step-by-step process of grantseeking, from preparation work through the advocacy that follows proposal submissions. Describes tasks such as conducting prospective donor research, preparing a preliminary document and meeting, and completing a proposal. # R0556

Starting Strong: A Self-Help Guide to Effective AmeriCorps Pre-Service Training. McKay, Emily Gantz, Diane Cabrales, et. al. Mosaica, Washington D.C. 1995 Provides information on the type of formal pre-service training is appropriate for a specific program. Written for AmeriCorps programs and Corporation for National Service staff, it reflects program member input regarding training methods. # R0135.

Trainer Training: How to Conduct Effective AmeriCorps Pre-Service Training. McKay, Emily Gantz, Diane Cabrales, et al. Mosaica, Washington D.C. 1995. Provides a one-day sample agenda for training. Contains experiential learning exercises such as trainer self-assessment, brainstorming for successful training, using small groups, trouble shooting and the different roles of the trainer/ facilitator. # C0060

Volunteer Development Toolbox, The. MacKenzie, Marilyn and Gail Moore. Heritage Arts Publishing, Baltimore, MD 1993. Exercises to assist staff and leadership volunteers in developing volunteer and staff effectiveness. Designed to promote active learning, exercise range from theoretical discussions of volunteer retention to one-on-one development of volunteer job descriptions. Provides sample worksheets and readings. # M0043

Volunteer Recruitment Book, The. Ellis, Susan J. ENERGIZE, Inc., Philadelphia, PA 1994. Information on how and where to recruit volunteers. Details techniques of recruiting and focuses on recruiting for diversity and appealing to special target audiences. # M0044

Individual Development Plan Worksheet

Name:

Position:

Date:

I. Self-Assessment

Greatest Strengths:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Development Areas:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

II. Competence (knowledge, skill, and/or behavior)

The one competency and corresponding behavior that I commit to working with for the next month is:

III. Development Plan for Competency Improvement

1. To support my continuous improvement with this competency and corresponding behaviors, I plan to incorporate the following practices into my work over the next month:

A:

B:

C:

2. I have chosen these specific practices because:

3. Some obstacles I may encounter include:

I plan to manage these obstacles by:

4. I will obtain feedback regularly from:

5. Additional resources that I will use to help in my development and my action plan for each (books, workshops, etc.):

IV. Payoff: Improved Performance

1. I will know that I have been successful in my improvement efforts when:

V. Results:

1. The activities I chose to help me improve my performance were:
_____ Very effective _____Somewhat effective _____Not effective

I rated it that way because:

2. Given these results, I plan to:

[Source: Management Coaching Curriculum developed by Janis Glenn and Jackie Jordan-Davis, TASC]

Stages of Group Development for AmeriCorps and Other National Service Programs

Primarily developed by Charlie Ford, private consultant for AmeriCorps programs, (e-mail: cford@pop.mindspring.com), with contributions from Diane Cabrales, Program Manager, MOSAICA, and Emilio N. Williams, formerly of NASCC

When teams and groups join together, they take on a life of their own, each forming a unique personality and energy level. One common factor in groups is the developmental stages they experience, comparable to stages of individual growth: infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Each stage has its own characteristics and requirements; each stage builds on the previous ones. The stages in the chart below are generally accepted classifications of development, identified first by Bruce Tuckman and Mary Ann Jensen. They have been tailored with AmeriCorps and other national service programs in mind. Please note that the timelines are average; members and individual groups will often develop at different paces.

FORMING	
Characteristics Within the Group	Tips for Members
Stage 1: "Trying to find my place."	Stage 1: "Trying to find my place."
<p>Group begins to experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of excitement, anticipation, and optimism; also feelings of suspicion, fear, and anxiety about the job ahead • Identification of its reason for existence • Self-orientation • Identification of the task to be accomplished • Exploration and discovery of how to interact with one another as a group <p>As the group forms and matures, natural leaders will emerge. The members in these roles will change several times during this phase of group development.</p>	<p>Observe your group so you can help move the energy within it toward building a strong team; you can't control it, but you can make sure it stays positive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve yourself; involve others • Be a positive force • Smile, smile, smile...and laugh as often as you need to • Be informed; read everything you can about the program and about the subject or population with whom you will be working • Be open-minded; be professional; be yourself • Voice your thoughts • Commit to having a good year • Start a journal
Tips for Staff	
<p>Stage 1: Observe</p> <p>Observe the group in action as much as possible. Observe how some people lead and some follow. Notice how members interact, the social skills they use, their mannerisms—all tell a story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be patient—it's a virtue • Be prepared—a good leader always is • Be knowledgeable—you are the expert, so know your material • Be a team—the example you set as a staff will influence the members • Be a leader—by being a good follower if that is what is needed • Be a counselor—members may need a shoulder to lean on • Be a facilitator—help members think things through • Be a supervisor—like it or not, it's part of the job • Have members establish group ground rules, the processes for enforcing violations, and the consequences • Be a teacher—be energetic; make the material alive and not boring • Develop a common vision and mission 	

- Have a swearing in ceremony presented by graduating members
- Create a group identity
- Discuss values and start developing an ethic of service

Training for members:

- Development goal—transitioning for the future
- Have workshops on life after AmeriCorps; provide information on job search paths and educational opportunities
- Have presentations on careers, colleges, and family issues

STORMING

Characteristics Within the Group	Tips for Members
Stage 2: “Hey! I’ve got something to say here!”	Stage 2: “Build, Bridge, Understand”
<p>Some group behaviors and attitudes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negativity • Dissatisfaction • Hostility • Crisis mode • Adjustment anxiety <p>Differences and suppressed tension begin to surface Members further define the energy level they dedicate to the task or project at hand; questions arise during this period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do I feel passionate about the purpose of this program? - Do I like how they are planning to meet the needs? - What am I going to do or say that will get my opinion heard? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a motivator! Someone is always in need of some building up • Be a positive force; maintain a sense of humor—it truly is good medicine • Accept and be open-minded—no one is perfect, and a closed-mind doesn’t accomplish anything • Know the issues before expressing your opinions, and then voice your thoughts clearly • Think about your motivation - it's easy to cross the line to anger • Write in your journal—it’s a good place to vent • Be aware of others’ feelings, listen to others, and leave the personality clashes at home • Think about and prepare for your future • Commit to letting nothing ruin your year!

Tips for Staff

Stage 2: Team Building, Reflections, and Training

The storming phase is just what it implies—staff should know members and their personalities by now, how they get along with each other, and how each tend to react to situations. Presence in the field is highly recommended to maintain order and ensure situations do not get out of hand, making the entire program look bad.

- See Stage 1 for all of the things to be, and add mediator—use your good skills to handle disagreements
- Arrange for group meetings with venting sessions—allow members’ voices to be heard
- Set and maintain a positive tone for the group
- Use job swapping as a way to prevent boredom
- Make sure ground rules are understood and observed
- Break workloads into manageable steps
- Take time for fun activities
- Allow members to contribute changes to the program
- Spend time one-to-one with members
- Develop a common vision and mission

Training for members:

- Continue with trainings in Stage 1
- Conflict resolution
- Communication skills
- Self-esteem building exercises
- Continue to discuss values & developing an ethic of service
- Discuss group dynamics

NORMING

Characteristics Within the Group	Tips for Members
Stage 3: “We’re all in this Together!”	Stage 3: “Motivate, Collaborate, Create”
<p>Some group behaviors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohesion around shared goals • Resolution of conflict • More acceptance of diversity in the group • Reconciliation; show of affection • Re-evaluation <p>Members have seen the coming together (forming), the semi-separation (storming), and now they have reconciled themselves to working together (norming) despite their differences with a new definition of purpose.</p>	<p>See Stage 2—be a motivator and watch your own motivation; maintain your sense of humor and be a positive force</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a leader—if you’re called to the role, try it out and use it to get things done • Be yourself • Voice your thoughts • Collaborate—assist each other to complete a goal or solve a problem • Continue writing in your journal • Think creatively

Tips for Staff

Stage 3: “We’re all in this together!”

Members are trying out how they can best work together; more solid leaders merge and must be nurtured and encouraged. Make sure that these leaders have the skills to lead, and also that they have the respect and approval of the other members.

- Be happy—you made it through storming
- Be a cheerleader—encourage your group and recognize them for the good work they are doing

Training for members:

- Continue with trainings in Stage 1
- Stronger community awareness
- Community reporting
- Initiative development skills
- Team development (ropes course, activity day, etc.)
- Personal development (career planning, budgeting, etc.)

PERFORMING

Characteristics Within the Group	Tips for Members
Stage 4: "Getting Things Done!"	Stage 4: "Focus, Produce"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohesiveness • Teamwork • Leadership • Performance <p>The group is starting to utilize its newly found "norms of trust," and can begin focusing on the service to be done; there should be enough drive, creativity, and cohesiveness to take on most tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve yourself and others • Be a positive force • Enjoy the laughter! • Read about the subject or population with whom you are working • Be professional • Continue thinking about what you will do after your service year • Continue writing in your journal

Tips for Staff

Stage 4: Promote Productivity

As the group enters the phase of creative and constructive service, be aware and attentive toward keeping them on track and productive. Let the group assume more responsibility, but remain available for problems that might arise. Members will emerge more and more as leaders and as a team.

- Involve the members more in the community
- Assist members in implementing their decisions
- Involve the group in community events
- Stay attentive to their needs

Help members evaluate the group and realize that the group is not an end in itself—that most of the work takes place outside the group

Training for members:

- Continue with trainings in Stage 1
- Development goal—better community awareness
- Communication skills (public)
- More project-related skills
- Project planning and development

ADJOURNING

Characteristics Within the Group	Tips for Members
Stage 5: "Now What?"	Stage 5: "Prepare, Think, Dedicate"
<p>Possible group feelings or reactions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negativity • Dissatisfaction • Hostility • Purging • Crisis <p>The group is realizing the end of service is near; it has been a year of sharing and growing with each other and now members are going to separate. For many, the group has been a safety net and truly has become their community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to think about and prepare for your future • Build bridges—goodbye doesn't have to mean forever • Enjoy the laughter, and don't be afraid to cry • Voice your thoughts and feelings • Give staff suggestions on how things could be done even better next year • Dedicate yourself to being a person of service for the rest of your life!

Tips for Staff

Stage 5: Promote Interaction, Reflection

Some members may exhibit negative behavior—be aware that some people hate to say goodbye, and members are also wondering about the future. Offer ample opportunities for interactive discussions and times for reflections. Staff may lead the sessions, but allow free rein for the group to express themselves as needed.

- Speak to each member individually about the experience; thank each one for their part in the year
- Stay attentive to the needs of the group
- Continue to help members prepare for the future; offer suggestions for those still unsure of what to do next
- Have a graduation ceremony with recognition awards; call the press for coverage of the event
- Have a going away party, a banquet, and/or appreciation day
- Place accomplishments in perspective

Training for members:

- Continue with trainings in Stage 1; this will be a time when members realize how important it has been to begin this in the first month.

Charting the Progression of AmeriCorps Members and Group Development



Exploring The Five Stages of Group Formation Using Adventure-Based and Active-Learning Techniques

Forming

Storming

Norming

Performing

Transforming

During a new corporate project, your project team is likely to encounter most if not all of the stages of group formation, commonly referred to as forming, storming, norming, performing and finally, transforming. While entire graduate dissertations, college and management classes and seminars, and numerous journal articles have been written on this subject, this brief article 'opens the door' to explaining and experiencing the stages of group formation, and building some of the skills necessary to successfully navigate each stage. This introduction to the stages of group formation is suitable for a two to three hour staff training program. Additional resources and references are provided at the end of the article for those interested in a more detailed explanation of these stages, and techniques for exploring them with your business community.

The stages of group development come from research by Tuckman and Jenson.
For more information about this work, review the following historical articles:

Tuckman, Bruce, 1965, "Developmental sequence of small groups," Psychological Bulletin, Volume 63, Number 6, p384-399.

Tuckman, Bruce & Jenson, Mary Ann, 1977, "Stages of small group development revisited," Group and Organizational Studies, Number 2, p419-427.

Tuckman, Bruce, 2001, "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups," Group Facilitation, Number 3, Spring, p66-81. A review of the original work, 35 years later.

You can find additional information related to the stages of group formation and group learning, in the Johnson & Johnson book, *Joining Together*, on page 469. See references at the end of this article.

A downloadable version of this article is available in PDF format from the Teamwork & Teamplay website at: www.teamworkandteamplay.com and also appeared in the May/June 2003 issue of *Camping Magazine* (www.acacamps.org) and the Spring 2003 issue of *Horizons Magazine* (UK) (www.outdoor-learning.org).

Consider the five stages of group formation shown above. The following information details how a typical corporate project team might progress through these stages, and provides activities for exploring each stage of group formation with the members of your team.

The Forming Stage

This is the polite, opening, get acquainted, ice breaking stage of group formation. This process begins at the moment new project team members begin to assemble for the first time. The opening meeting, the general welcome comments from the manager, the facility orientation session, and even the informal discussions after the initial gathering are all part of the forming stage. At this point, members of the group are just trying to identify who's who, and possibly where they fit into that plan. This stage includes forming an atmosphere of safety and acceptance, avoiding controversy, and is filled with guidance and direction from the project team leader or manager.

Activities for the Forming Stage

Get acquainted and community building activities are used here to form the atmosphere of safety and acceptance. There are a few more activities suggested in this stage because it is important to build a strong foundation if the rest of the stages are to be successfully navigated.

Believe it or Knot

Thanks to Mike Anderson of Learning Works for this excellent get acquainted activity. With the entire group holding a Raccoon Circle (a 15 foot long section of tubular climbing webbing tied with a knot, or, if webbing is not available, a 15 foot long rope knotted to form a circle), the knot is used as a pointer to identify the person talking. Begin by passing the knot to the right around the group. Someone in the group says "Stop!" the knot stops, and the person nearest to it has the opportunity to disclose some interesting fact about themselves, such as, "I can write computer programs in 4 different languages!" It is now the discussion and responsibility of the rest of the participants to decide whether they believe that this information is true or false. After some discussion, the group gives their opinion of the validity or falseness of the disclosure, and the person providing the comment can tell the real story. After a person has revealed the true nature of their comments (true or false), they say "left" or "right" and then "Stop!" and a new person has the opportunity to disclose something interesting or unusual to the group.

The level of disclosure to the group is often a measure of the closeness, unity and respect within the group. For example, a disclosure such as, "I have been with this company for 3 years," is a lower level of disclosure than "I need to be better at my job for this project to succeed." Depending on the group setting, and the purpose of this activity for your group, different levels of information or disclosure are appropriate. As the group becomes more unified, this activity can bring out greater disclosure between members of the project team ("I'm not sure if I have enough resources to complete my part of the project on time.")

Commonalities

Begin with partners for this activity. This conversational activity has the goal of identifying unique and sometimes unusual events, activities and life experiences that we have in common with other members of our group. The two partners need to identify three unique items that they have in common. Encourage participants to dig deep for these items. For example, they may discover that they both like dogs, but under closer examination, they may also discover that they like the same breed of dog. Additionally, they may discover that they both enjoy reading, but by digging a bit deeper, they may discover that they have read the same book in the past 6 months or perhaps enjoy the same author.

After identifying three attributes that they have in common, these two partners raise their hands, and find another group of two ready to form a group of four. Now the challenge is to identify 2 items that they have in common. Again, look deep, and no fair using any of the attributes already identified.

Finally, after this group of four finds out what they have in common, they raise their hands and join another group of four, for a total of eight. The goal for these eight is to find ONE unusual event, interest or activity that they have in common. Have each of these groups of eight tell the other groups what they have in common. Again, the more unique and unusual, the better (or at least the more interesting!)

Which Side of the Road are You On?

Possibly one of the greatest needs within a group is to identify what unites the members of the group. To this end, the goal here is to identify some commonalities shared by various members of the group. In this case, the more job related, the better.

Which Side of the Road are You On requires a central gathering place, and two boundary lines, which can be made using masking tape, string, rope, a hallway or sidewalk. Have participants begin by 'standing in the middle of the road.' As the first company truck comes barreling down the road, loaded with information for your project, team members must decide which side of the road they should be on. Some of the following decisions are fairly easy and the information content doesn't have severe consequences. Others may make or break the entire project. After choosing sides, give project team members a minute to see who is on the same side of the road with them, and to discuss why they chose this particular side.

PC		Macintosh
Loud		Quiet
Running	the	Walking
Save Money	middle	Spend Money
Fixed Schedule	of the	Flex Time
Sky Diving	road	Deep Sea Diving
Problem Solver		Problem Maker
Hamburgers or Hotdogs		Chicken or Salad

The object here is to find interests, activities, choices and decisions that project team members have in common. Obviously team members can be on ‘different sides of the road,’ but don’t focus on what is different, but rather who is on the same side with you. Alliances can be important. Be careful to choose topics appropriately for the audience that you are serving. This activity can be used with even large project teams, provided the folks in the middle of the road can hear when the truck is coming!

This activity also provides the opportunity for a bit of group discussion throughout the process. For example, were some folks left ‘in the middle of the road’ and only saved by another person pulling them to safety as the information truck came speeding towards them? Or did they become ‘corporate roadkill?’ Did some folks change their minds during a particular decision, and then change sides? Is there always a right and wrong side of the road, or more appropriately, two possible choices, both of which have merit? Does the entire project team need to be on the same side of a particular issue for the team to move forward successfully? How would you go about trying to get everyone on the team on the same side of the road for a key project decision?

In the book *Good to Great*, Collins talks about ‘getting the right people on the bus and the wrong people off the bus,’ and then ‘getting the right people into the right seats.’ This activity be used to explore where some members of your project team choose to be on specific team or management issues, but you might want to wait for the ‘storming’ stage of group formation to bring this up, rather than here in the safe environment of the ‘forming’ stage.

The Storming Stage

This second stage of group formation introduces conflict and competition into the formerly safe and pleasant work environment. In many corporate settings, this stage typically is encountered around week two. Why week two? Because that is when most project team members have had the weekend to think about the resources and requirements of the job ahead. Suddenly those things which didn’t seem to matter, begin to matter, and conflicts arise. Staff behavior ranges from silence to domination in this environment, and a project leader or manager needs to demonstrate coaching to successfully move through this stage.

Activities for the Storming Stage

While some project team members would rather avoid the conflict of this stage, it is important to build skills and show them how to cope and deal with the storming stage. The activities in this section, therefore, contain just a bit of stress (so that the door may be ‘opened’ to discuss what is really going on). The following activities are very challenging, and need to have a suitable amount of time after each one for discussion within the group.

Photo Finish

Thanks to Sam Sikes for this seemingly simple but yet complex activity. You can find this and other activities in his book, *Executive Marbles* (1-888-622-4203).

Photo Finish (or the Finish Line) requires a straight line, made from masking tape or string. The task is for the ALL project team members to cross the line at exactly the same time. You can additionally “stress” the group by minimizing the available space that they have to plan prior to crossing the finish line. For example, if you place the masking tape finish line 3 feet away from a wall or fence, then the project team will have minimal space to work and communicate effectively - which in itself will lead to more mistakes by team members breaking the boundary.

Tell the group that they have 15 minutes to make 5 attempts to cross the finish line at exactly the same time. This is a great opportunity to use a digital camera for instant feedback. Every time someone breaks the plane of the finish line, the facilitator yells, “Click!” even for the occasionally careless mistake.



This activity involves planning, communication, timing and occasionally the ability to deal with frustration. Discussion topics after the completion of this activity include: What was difficult about the work environment? What could have been done to improve this situation? Who is in charge here that could have made the decision to improve the work environment? How did the group treat the team members that made unplanned mistakes? Could this task have been completed with zero mistakes? What do we as a project team need to do to cut down on the number of mistakes we make in the future on this project? In the end, the task was completed, but how do the members of the team feel about their participation?

Conventional corporate wisdom says that in order for a team to be successful, they need a combination of three components: a worthwhile task, an opportunity for growth and advancement, and a chance to form working relationships with the members of the team. In this activity, would you say that the team completed a worthy task? How about having an opportunity to learn, grow or advanced? How about improving the working relationships between team members? If any of these components was less than satisfactory, what could be done to improve them?

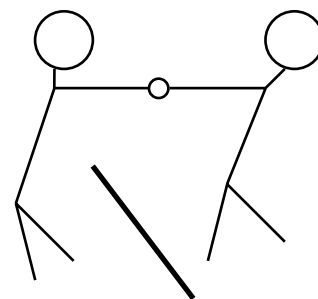
Cross the Line

This activity requires a single straight line. With half of the group on one side of the line and standing about 6 feet (2 meters) behind the line, and the other half of the team on the other side, the scene is set for a moment of conflict (of “us” vs. “them”). Make no mistake, this activity is a bit higher level than most, but it is excellent for setting the stage to talk about conflict, negotiation and win/win, win/lose, and lose/lose scenarios.

Tom Heck calls this activity, “Their Ain’t No Flies On Me!”, and begins this activity by having one side say, “There ain’t no flies on me, there ain’t no flies on me, there might be flies on you (point to folks on the other side), but there ain’t no flies on me!”, and then boldly taking a step towards the line (with just the right amount of attitude). The other side now replies, “there ain’t no flies on me, there ain’t no flies on me, there might be flies on you (pointing at the other folks), but there ain’t no flies on me!”, and takes a step towards the line. The first side now repeats with twice the attitude, and moves to the line, followed by the second side repeating their lines, and stepping face to face with the other side.

The facilitator now says, “you have 3 seconds to get the person across the line from you onto your side of the line. GO!”

Typically, this phrasing results in a rather quick tug of war between partners, and usually a physical solution (for one person at least) to the challenge. This provides an excellent opportunity to open the door for discussion on conflict, challenges, attitude, negotiation, and how to resolve differences between people. For example, you can ask, “how many partner teams ended up in a win/lose scenario, where one member obtained what they wanted (getting their partner to their side), but the other member did not?” “What about a lose/lose scenario, where both members struggled, but neither one obtained their goal?” And finally, “were there any teams that achieved a win/win solution, where both partners changed sides?” “What is it about our corporate culture that so many members of our team end up in win/lose or lose/lose scenarios, rather than a win/win solution?” “How can we fix this situation?” The next time you are in a ‘cross the line’ situation, what is the first thing you will do to avoid a win/lose or lose/lose scenario?



Blind Square

In a safe environment (large open carpeted room with no obstacles, or perhaps a flat grassy outdoor space) blindfold the entire group, and allow them to search as a group and find a nearby piece of rope (about 100 feet long). After finding the rope, instruct the group that their goal, while still blindfolded, is to create a perfect square with the rope. You might continue and remind the group that a square geometrically consists of a closed shape with four equal length sides, and four 90 degree corners. Participants are allowed to slide along the length of the rope, but cannot let go, change sides, or move around another participant.

This simple to explain but extremely difficult and time consuming to complete activity works best with a group of about a 10-15 participants. You can choose to invite one person to ‘observe’ the group, but not assist them in the completion of their task, and then to share their observations when the group has finished. The storming stage of this activity will be very obvious. Communication breakdowns, leadership abilities, directions, power issues and resource constraints all contribute to team member frustration and often make what appears to be a simple task infinitely more difficult. If establishing realistic scheduling goals is appropriate for this project team, then ask them to estimate a ‘time till completion’ for creating this rope square. If establishing quality standards, or work performance standards is realistic, then ask them to establish (while blindfolded), the performance criteria on how they will measure the outcome of this rope square project.. If team members are likely to encounter limitations in technology, wrong or misleading information, or confusion during their project work, consider tying one end of the rope permanently to a tree, fence, car or other non-moving object. Or tie a knot or two in the rope (but not at a distance that is likely to correspond with a corner).

After the group has reached the end (notice, I didn't say 'completed' the activity), here are a few ideas to discuss: Was the time estimate reasonable given the task? What was most of the time spent doing? What was the 'breakthrough' point in this activity? Were all members of the group equally engaged in the activity? Did some members of the group have more 'power' than others? If the group was asked to create another shape blindfolded, do you think you could be more efficient? Quicker? Accurate? This stage of group formation is called the Storming stage. What types of team behaviors did you notice during this activity that tells you the group was storming? What skills do you have now that you can use in the workplace when tasks become frustrating or difficult?

The Norming Stage

This third stage of group formation is typically a welcome breath of fresh air after the storming stage. Although the project team is not yet at the high performing stage, some of the bugs are beginning to be worked out within the group, and good things are beginning to happen. This stage of group formation includes cohesion, sharing and trust building, creativity and skill acquisition. The project leader or program manager demonstrates support during this stage.

Activities for the Norming Stage

Sharing, trust building, and skill building activities are used in the Norming stage. In addition to those shown here, check out additional activities in the '52 Staff Meetings' section of this book.

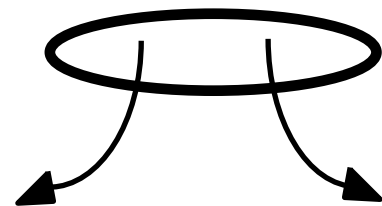
Inside Out

This is a great initial problem solving activity. Begin with a Raccoon Circle (15 foot long rope, tied into a circle) on the floor. Have the entire group step inside the circle. The task now is for the entire group to go from the inside of the circle to the outside, by going underneath the Raccoon Circle, without anyone in the group using their arms, shoulders, or hands.

What is important in this activity, is to stress the group problem solving process. In order for other members of the group to assist in the completion of the task, they need to know the plan, and what their part is in the solution.

To this end, encourage the group to "plan their work" and then "work their plan." This means that prior to ANY action, the group will need to plan their approach to solving this problem, and making sure that everyone in the group knows their part of the plan.

After completing the task, debriefing questions include asking the group if they had a plan, and did they change the plan during the completion of the activity, and if so, why? As a second part to this activity, you can also ask the group to go Outside In, again without using their hands, arms or shoulders.... and see if they "plan their work" before "working their plan."



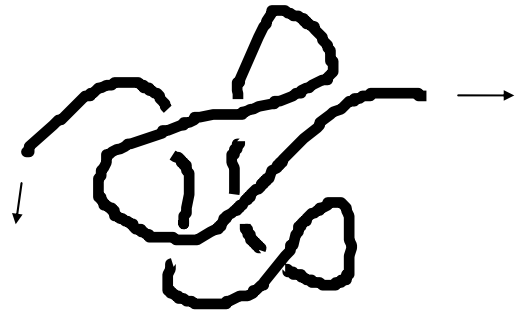
Finally, Inside Out can be used to explore ethical behavior in the workplace. At a time when corporate responsibility and financial accounting irregularities both make the business headlines, ethical behavior is certainly important. Once the group has returned into the circle, ask if they 'followed the rules.' Most will likely nod their heads yes. Then ask if anyone used their arms, shoulders or hands to complete the task. For example, to crawl on their hands and knees (see picture). Or to assist another member of their group, by holding them up. Suddenly some folks will realize that they interpreted the rules to mean, "not to touch the Raccoon Circle with our arms, shoulders or hands." This is an excellent opportunity to discuss the public's perception of this group's ability to follow rules, corporate guidelines, policies, civil ordinances or federate mandates.

Not Knots

In this activity, which can be accomplished with only a single piece of webbing (in a straight line, without a water knot), a “doodle” is constructed (see example below) and the group is given the choice of whether this doodle will create a KNOT or NOT A KNOT, when the ends of the webbing are pulled.

The object here is to provide the group with some tools to use when they cannot easily form a consensus. Typically, upon analysis, about half of the group thinks the doodle will form a knot, and the other half a straight line. If this is the case, ask participants to partner with another person that has a different viewpoint (i.e. one partner from the KNOT side, and one partner from the NOT A KNOT side). By learning how to listen to a person with a different viewpoint, group members learn how to cooperate. After this discussion, ask participants to choose sides, with the KNOT decision folks on one side of the knot doodle, and the NOT A KNOT folks on the other side.

At this point, it is likely that there will still not be a complete consensus within the group. Prior to slowly pulling the ends of the knot doodle, let the members of the group know that you will pull the knot doodle slowly, and that they can change sides at any time during the unraveling of the knot doodle (this illustrates the ability to make an initial decision, but still be flexible as more information becomes available). This is also a good time to discuss ‘risk taking’ on the job, and what the risk is of choosing what might be the wrong side.



The Blind Trust Drive

Participants are asked to choose a partner for this activity that is approximately the same height. This activity should be conducted in a flat open space with no obstacles. One person stands in front, arms extended like they are holding onto the steering wheel of a car (the driver). Their partner stands behind them, with their hands on the shoulders of the person in front (the backseat driver). The ‘blind’ driver now closes their eyes, while the sighted ‘backseat’ driver safely steers them around the playing area. Remember, this is not a demolition derby or bumper cars, and a facilitator may act as the local law enforcement officer if necessary! Halfway through the activity, partners switch roles, and continue. At the completion of the activity, partners can provide feedback to their backseat drivers, and tell them what they liked about working with their partner, or what they would change about the guidance offered during the activity.

The Performing Stage

The fourth stage of group formation provides a feeling of unity, group identity, interdependence and independence. It is the most highly productive stage. Leadership from the project leader or program manager comes in the form of delegation. The team has all the skills, resources and talent needed to complete the task.

Activities for the Performing Stage



This stage is best explored using challenging activities that require advanced skills, but which can be successfully accomplished by the group. Activities that build enthusiasm are also helpful here. Large group projects such as tower building (using Tinkertoys®, uncooked spaghetti and marshmallows, newspaper and masking tape, or even PVC tubing), and challenge courses (low and high ropes activities) are useful. In the photograph, a group is completing a PVC tubing network which has plenty of connections, but no holes for anything to ‘leak’ out of the network. These Teamplay Tubes and other teambuilding props are available from Training Wheels Inc. at 1-888-553-0147 or www.training-wheels.com.

Grand Prix Racing

Turn the Raccoon Circle into a complete circle or loop using a water knot, and you are ready for the ultimate in sport racing. Thanks to Tom Heck for not only the idea for this activity, but also the enthusiasm to lead it effectively. This activity will boost the enthusiasm of your audience, and provide some moderate competition in the process.

Begin by spreading several Raccoon Circles around the available space, in close proximity to each other. Ask participants to join one of the “racing teams”, picking their favorite color team in the process. Approximately 5 to 10 participants per Raccoon Circle. Have participants hold the Raccoon Circle with both hands in front of them.

“Ladies and Gentlemen! It is summertime, and that means one thing in this part of the world - Grand Prix Racing ! Now I know that you are such die-hard race fans that just the thought of a race makes your heart beat faster. So this race comes in three parts. First, when I say that “we’re going to have a race”, your response is loud, “Yahoo!!!!” Next I’ll say, start your engines! and I want to hear your best race car sounds (audience practices making race car revving engine, shifting gears and braking sounds).

Finally, with so many cars on the track today, it will be difficult to see just which group finishes their race first, so we’ll need a sign indicating when your group is finished. That sign is to raise your hands (and the Raccoon Circle) above your heads and yell “Yessssssss!”

Logistically, Grand Prix involves having the group transfer the knot around the group as quickly as possible, using only their hands. This activity can even be performed for a seated audience. To begin, you’ll need a “start / finish” line, which can be the person that was born the farthest distance away from the present location. The race begins at this location, and ends when the knot is passed around the circle, and returns to this same location (Yessssssss!)

Typically in Raccoon Circle Grand Prix racing, there are three qualifying rounds or races. The first race is a single lap race to the right, with the knot traveling once around the inside of the circle to the right (counterclockwise). The second race is a multi-lap race (two or three laps) to the left (clockwise) around the circle. And the final race of the series, is a “winner take all” championship race, with one lap to the right (counterclockwise) followed by one lap to the left (clockwise).

Incidentally, after this activity, the group will not only be energized, but perhaps in a slightly competitive mood. From a sequencing standpoint, you can either continue this atmosphere (with more competitive challenges - such as a volleyball game, or corporate olympics) or introduce a bit of counterpoint, by following this activity with one that requires the group working together in a collaborative manner.

The Transforming Stage

The final stage of group formation is the other bookend to the initial forming stage. The Transforming stage allows the group to regroup, thank the participants and move on at the completion of the project or task. This stage is marked by recognition by the project leader, conclusion and disengagement by the team members.

Activities for the Transforming Stage

Allow for the completion and conclusion of the group process. Feelings of celebration and affirmation are suitable. Different team members may experience this final stage at different rates. Don’t rush for closure. For some team members, this project may have been the highlight of their career to date. The first activity, A Circle of Kindness, involves appropriate contact between team members, and for many teams (nurses, primary care givers, teachers and other ‘hands-on’ professionals) this style is fine. The second activity, Virtual Slideshow, has no contact between team members, is largely verbal, and may be used in settings where less contact is desired.

A Circle of Kindness

Form a double circle with all group members, with one partner facing the center of the circle, and their partner behind them (also facing the center, with their hands on the shoulders of the inner circle person). The inner circle is asked to close their eyes, and only reply ‘thank you’ or keep silent. The outer circle is asked to quietly talk into the ear of the inner circle participants, mentioning something important that they learned from them or appreciated about them during the project, or a pleasant memory, or any other positive comment. The outer group then moves one person to the right, and continues. When the outer group has completed the circle, they are asked to become the center group, and the process begins again for a second round.

Virtual Slideshow

With all participants seated in a close space, an imaginary slide projector ‘clicker’ is passed around the group. Group members are asked to ‘show’ an imaginary slide or photograph from the project, illustrating a perfect moment, or perhaps a moment from the future, that will be different because that person had the opportunity to work as part of this team. If you would like a non-imaginary virtual slideshow clicker, you can order one from Training Wheels at 888-553-0147 or www.training-wheels.com. This company carries a variety of conversation, group discussion & debriefing aids that help bring all the voices to your corporate discussions.

References and Resources

Teamwork & Teamplay, by Jim Cain and Barry Jolliff, 1998, Kendall Hunt Publishers, Dubuque, IA Phone (800) 228-0810 ISBN 0-7872-4532-1 417 pages of activities, like those shown in this article.

The Book on Raccoon Circles, by Jim Cain and Tom Smith, 2002, Learning Unlimited, Tulsa, OK, USA Phone (888) 622-4203 www.learningunlimited.com ISBN 0-9646541-6-4 Hundreds of activities for creating community, that you can present with minimal props. 272 pages of ideas.

A Teachable Moment – A Facilitator’s Guide to Activities for Processing, Debriefing, Reviewing and Reflection, by Jim Cain, Michelle Cummings and Jennifer Stanchfield, Kendall Hunt Publishers, Dubuque, IA Phone (800) 228-0810 ISBN 0-7575-1782-X Over 130 different ways to review with a group.

Teambuilding Puzzles by Jim Cain, Mike Anderson, Chris Cavet and Tom Heck. FUNDoing Publications. ISBN 0-9746442-0-X Over 100 puzzles and challenges for teams. Available from ACA, 1-800-428-CAMP.

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Joining Together - Group Theory and Group Skills by David W. Johnson and Frank P. Johnson, 1994, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, MA ISBN 0-205-15846-3. Although set in the business world, this book is applicable to academic fields, social organizations and camping programs as well.

You can download a collection of adventure-based team building activities using simple props at:

www.teamworkandteamplay.com/raccooncircles.html



Life After AmeriCorps Resources for Members

The Corporation for National & Community Service has an AmeriCorps Alumni Page that allows alumni to effectively access information and resources that are a high priority for both recent and not-so-recent alumni, such as using the Segal Education Award, finding a job, continuing civic engagement, and staying involved with AmeriCorps.

www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/alumni

Segal AmeriCorps Education Award Resources:

- Use Your Education Award:
www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/segal-americorps-education-award/use-your-education-award
- Find a list of institutions that match the Education Award here:
www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/segal-americorps-education-award/matching-institutions

Career Resources:

- **Employers of National Service-** Initiative to connect AmeriCorps and Peace Corps alumni with employers from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. More than 500 employers are part of the program
www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/employers-national-service
- **AmeriCorps Alums Professional Development Program-** National network to connect the one million plus alumni of all AmeriCorps programs that have served since 1994. *(Now part of Service Year Alliance)*
www.americorpsalums.org

Members should also search out local chapters of AmeriCorps Alums

- **Service Year Alums-** Registering as an alum on ServiceYear.org provides access to tools, discounts, and benefits
<https://serviceyear.org/alums/>



Civil Rights / Equal Opportunity Requirements

As described in application Assurances, AmeriCorps programs are required to comply with all federal statutes relating to non-discrimination. These include, but are not limited to, [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) and [Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended](#). Program staff should review CNCS' [Grant Program Civil Rights Policy](#).

To learn more about your responsibilities relating to non-discrimination, please review the Assurances in your AmeriCorps grant contract and visit CNCS' website: www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/civil-rights-eo-reqs

Corporation for National and Community Service

NationalService.gov



Grant Program Civil Rights and Non-Harassment Policy

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has zero tolerance for the harassment of any individual or group of individuals for any reason. CNCS is committed to treating all persons with dignity and respect. CNCS prohibits all forms of discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service. All programs administered by, or receiving federal financial assistance from CNCS must be free from all forms of harassment.

Harassment is unacceptable in CNCS offices or campuses, in other service-related settings such as training sessions or service sites, and at service-related social events. Any such harassment, if identified, will result in immediate corrective action, up to and including removal or termination of any CNCS employee or national service participant. All recipients of federal financial assistance, including individuals, organizations, programs and/or projects are also subject to this zero tolerance policy. When a violation occurs, appropriate corrective action subject to regulatory procedures will take place, up to and including termination of federal financial assistance from all federal sources.

Slurs and other verbal or physical conduct relating to an individual's gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or any other basis constitute harassment when such behavior has the purpose or effect of interfering with service performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive service environment. Harassment includes, but is not limited to: explicit or implicit demands for sexual favors; pressure for dates; deliberate touching, leaning over, or cornering; offensive teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions; letters, phone calls, or distribution or display of offensive materials; offensive looks or gestures; gender, racial, ethnic, or religious baiting; physical assaults or other threatening behavior; and demeaning, debasing or abusive comments or actions that intimidate.

CNCS does not tolerate harassment by anyone, including persons of the same or different races, sexes, religions, or ethnic origins; a CNCS employee or supervisor; a project, or site employee or supervisor; a non-employee (e.g., client); or a co-worker or national service participant.

I expect supervisors and managers of CNCS programs and projects, when made aware of alleged harassment by employees, national service participants, or other individuals, to immediately take swift and appropriate action. CNCS will not tolerate retaliation against a person who raises harassment concerns in good faith. Any CNCS employee who violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination, and any grantee that permits harassment in violation of this policy will be subject to a finding of non-compliance and administrative procedures that may result in termination of federal financial assistance from CNCS and all other federal agencies.

Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against in violation of civil rights laws, regulations, or this policy, or in retaliation for opposition to discrimination or participation in discrimination complaint proceedings (e.g., as a complainant or witness) in any CNCS program or project, may raise his or her concerns with the CNCS Equal Opportunity Program (EOP). Discrimination claims not brought to the attention of EOP within 45 days of occurrence may not be accepted in a formal complaint of discrimination. You are not required to use a program, project, or sponsor dispute resolution procedure before contacting the EOP. If another procedure is used, it does not affect the 45-day time limit. The EOP may be reached at (202) 606-7503 or eo@cns.gov.

Barbara Stewart

Barbara Stewart
Chief Executive Officer

3-1-18

Date

25 Tips for Facilitating Disability Inclusion in Your Program

Tip 1: Avoid presumptions about the capability of people with disabilities to serve. Ask them what they can do; focus on experience and abilities.

Here are some ways you can do that:

- Share the Department of Labor “I Can” PSA with your network: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BG_W7wAe1kw
- Use the posters and discussion guides in your program for the “I Can” PSA to further the conversation on the capabilities of people with disabilities: <http://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/blog/index.php/i-can-toolkit/>

Tip 2: There’re more people with disabilities in your service program than you thought. Read the [ADA definition](#), learn who’s covered.

Learn about how the term “disability” is currently defined and interpreted by law: <https://askjan.org/bulletins/adaaa1.htm#definition>

Tip 3: Making disability accommodations is not complex, consult JAN for assistance. The majority cost \$0 and the average actual cost is \$500. #JANatJAN

- The Job Accommodation Network (www.askjan.org) is the free technical assistance provider for CNCS programs, employers, and people with disabilities. You can contact JAN any time with questions about making reasonable disability accommodations in your service program and broader disability questions as well.
- Learn about the low cost and high impact of reasonable accommodation: <https://askjan.org/media/lowcosthighimpact.html>

Tip 4: People with disabilities don’t require “special” opportunities, just reasonable accommodations to serve alongside other corps members.

- Take the 15 minute CNCS ecourse on Making Reasonable Accommodations: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/disability-inclusion>

Tip 5: The Job Accommodation Network #JANatJAN, provides individualized disability accommodation consulting and tip sheets on most disabilities.

- The Job Accommodation Network (“JAN”) produces fact sheets on the majority of disabilities/ limitations. Check out this resource so you know where you can find helpful information to accommodate service members/volunteers with disabilities: <https://askjan.org/links/atoz.htm>

Tip 6: Put members with disabilities on the front line, Department of Labor research shows the public prefers entities that do over those who don’t.

Look at the Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy page for this finding and for more information: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/Employers.htm>

Tip 7: National Service provides pre-employment skill building for members with disabilities...your program’s disability inclusion matters

- This joint letter released by CNCS & DOL’s office of Disability Employment Policy outlines the pre-employment skill building individuals with disabilities gain through national service: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/about/pathway-to-employment>

Take Action for Disability Inclusion

Tip 8: Ask alumni and members with disabilities to share their service experiences #disabilityservicestories; contribute to the narrative

- By sharing their experiences, alumni and current members with disabilities break through preconceived ideas about serving with disabilities. Read these spotlight blogs: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/disability-inclusion>
- Encourage those you know to share their stories via twitter. #disabilityservicestories

Tip 9: Those supervising members: take the five short ecourses to ensure preparedness for any disability-related issues during your next service term.

- Take the 15-minute CNCS ecourses on disability inclusion topics in national service programs: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/disability-inclusion>

Tip 10: Determine your service program's accessibility: including physical access, electronic communications, accommodation policy.

Prepare your program for making accommodations by creating an accommodation policy. Learn more about this at:

- EEOC's Practical Advice for Drafting and Implementing Reasonable Accommodation Procedures under Executive Order 13164 at http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/implementing_accommodation.html
- Establishing Procedures to Facilitate the Provision of Reasonable Accommodation at http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/accommodation_procedures.html
- Sample policies at <https://askjan.org/links/adapolicies.html>
- Link to draft checklist for physical accessibility: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/disability-inclusion/accessibility-checklist>
- Link to Access board for electronic access standards: <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/communications-and-it>

Tip 11: Revisit your program's core service functions. Ensure these focus on core tasks and don't unnecessarily preclude people with disabilities

- People are qualified for your program if they can perform the core functions of the service position with or without reasonable accommodations for a disability. Sometimes programs will include service functions that aren't essential or required for all service members in the program. Pulling the non-essential items from a service position description will mean that only truly essential functions remain. This makes it much easier to determine disability accommodations. For example, a program recently reviewed their corps member functions and realized that they could pull driving a car/having a driver's license. While the program needed to ensure every service team had eligible drivers, this type of requirement may preclude someone who is otherwise able to perform all the service functions but are unable to drive because of a disability. The impact is that more individuals are qualified to become national service members in this program.
 - Check out guidance on reviewing your position descriptions: <https://askjan.org/media/jobdescriptions.html>

Tip 12: Review your member selection process and ensure this doesn't screen out people with disabilities.

- All those involved in your selection process can benefit from reading "Disability Etiquette in the Workplace" – a fact sheet about selection process' do's and don'ts on disability. <https://askjan.org/topics/disetiq.htm>

Tip 13: Share recruitment information with people with disabilities Voc Rehab, Center for Independent Living, College accommodation centers & disability orgs

- Share recruitment information with your local college community with disabilities by sending the office for students with disabilities your recruitment information to circulate (each college names the office differently – look for offices with “disability” in the name or listed in the “Student Affairs” section of the webpage).
- Find and share information with a local Center for Independent Living (a community center for people with disabilities): <http://www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory>
- For a list of Vocational Rehabilitation offices by state, visit <https://askjan.org/cgi-win/TypeQuery.exe?902>.
- For a list of membership-based disability organizations with a national presence, visit the National Disability Leadership Alliance page for organizational links http://www.disabilityleadership.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4&Itemid=6

Tip 14: Foster a relationship with a contact that can connect you with potential candidates with disabilities each recruitment cycle.

- Roster of local Center for Independent Living (a community center for people with disabilities): <http://www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory>
- For a list of Vocational Rehabilitation offices by state, visit <https://askjan.org/cgi-win/TypeQuery.exe?902>.

Tip 15: Remember to ask candidates if they need accommodations during member selection interactions and interviews.

- Share the disability do’s and don’ts for interviewing with those handling your process: <https://askjan.org/job/dosint.htm>

Tip 16: Front-load making accommodations: Add contact info for accommodations point person to your offer letter. Repeat at in-person training.

- The first moment supervisors can discuss disability accommodations is when offering a service position. By integrating the contact person for arranging accommodations in your program in your offer letter/email, you are ensuring you have the longest possible window of time to coordinate disability accommodations before the term begins. Reiterating the accommodation process at in-person training is helpful for those who have yet to disclose their disabilities.

Tip 17: Making accommodations? Start out by discussing what’s worked well in similar circumstances with your members with disabilities.

- Those with disabilities are the most knowledgeable about their unique limitations, starting your accommodation dialogue with them will jumpstart making accommodations. Take the 15 minute ecourse on Making Reasonable Accommodations: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/disability-inclusion>

Tip 18: Will the accommodation work? Try an original accommodation plan for a set period. Do a check-in with the member and improve as needed.

- Take the 15 minute ecourse on Making Reasonable Accommodations: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/disability-inclusion>

Tip 19: Create staffing & service teams with members with disabilities fully integrated to serve alongside those without disabilities.

- Learn how disability integration was a key goal of the Americans with Disabilities Act by reading about the Act’s origins: <https://askjan.org/media/adahandbook/PREAMBLE.html>

Tip 20: Educate fellow grantees by sharing your disability inclusion strategies & success stories on social media using #Service4All and #GranteeInclusionStrategy and email them to disability@cns.gov.

Tip 21: Understand & communicate to members:SSI isn't impacted by living allowance - SSDI is - unless you are serving with VISTA (see the HEARTH Act).

- Use the Dear Colleague letter CNCS & DOL issued that addresses income exclusions for those on disability benefits as well as the other resources at the bottom of this letter: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/about/pathway-to-employment>

Tip 22: Match members with disabilities (and those without) with a mentor who can offer support, guidance and problem-solve. Mentors increase effectiveness.

- Understand the connection between successful outcomes and mentorship for people with disabilities by checking out these resources: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/cultivate.htm>

Tip 23: If things aren't running smoothly, include making (or tweaking) reasonable accommodations in your solution plan.

- Recognize that someone with a disability who isn't accommodated properly may not perform to their full potential. There may be members in your program who have not disclosed disabilities because of fear, stigma or lack of understanding the process. Be a supportive supervisor and before you discipline a member, consider asking if there was something they needed to perform better. Approaching a struggling member with resources may be the positive change needed to bring out their best and avoid future issues.

Tip 24: Track disability inclusion: encourage all members to complete a NEW optional disability question on exit surveys.

Tip 25: Service provides transferrable pre-employment experience. Share transition resources with the NEW ENOS toolkit for Alumni with disabilities.

- For more information, <https://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/employers-national-service/alumni/employment-and-alumni-disabilities>



Access AmeriCorps

Disability Inclusion Policy

Mission

Volunteer Tennessee encourages individuals with physical or intellectual disabilities to participate as AmeriCorps members through AmeriCorps programs operating in the state. We encourage a diverse membership that includes people with disabilities to participate as national and community service members through our many programs.

Definition of Disability

According to the Americans With Disabilities Act, the term "disability" means, with respect to an individual, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the individual's major life activities, a record of having such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. "Major life activities" means functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, etc. Additionally, a "qualified individual with a disability" is an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodations, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by the program.

Policy

Under Federal law, any program that receives federal funds is required to comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. In compliance with the Federal law, all AmeriCorps programs prohibit any form of discrimination against persons with disabilities in recruitment, as well as in service. No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the program, services, or activities of the program, or be subjected to discrimination by the program. Nor shall the program exclude or otherwise deny equal services, programs, or activities to an individual because of the known disability.

Reasonable Accommodation

A reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a program site that will enable a qualified applicant or AmeriCorps member with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential service functions.

Reasonable accommodation also includes adjustments to assure that a qualified individual with a disability has rights and privileges in service equal to those of individuals without disabilities.

All AmeriCorps programs shall make reasonable accommodations in practices and/or procedures when the accommodations are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability. Accommodations are "reasonable" when they are practical or feasible. The program does not have to provide reasonable accommodations that would impose undue hardship on the operation

of the program. According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), an undue hardship must be based on an individualized assessment of current circumstances that show that a specific reasonable accommodation would cause significant difficulty or expense.

Procedure for Requesting Reasonable Accommodation Funds

Reasonable accommodation reimbursement grants were first made available to AmeriCorps State and National grantees in 2014 to make it easier for members with disabilities to fully participate in all aspects of national service. In the first reasonable accommodation reimbursement grant application period, CNCS reimbursed organizations for accommodations for American Sign Language interpreting for members who are deaf to attend orientation, training, and conduct meetings. CNCS also reimbursed grantees for the cost of products such as modified office equipment for members with physical disabilities requiring adaptive office products.

Things to know about the process:

It is important to understand that by applying for reasonable accommodation reimbursement grants, you are requesting to be reimbursed for expenses incurred. CNCS will not make advance payments to cover expenses.

The reasonable accommodation grant funds are available on a noncompetitive basis and requests are processed in the order they are received.

CNCS and Volunteer Tennessee encourage you to determine what each of your service members' accommodation needs are for the service term so you can submit requests for reimbursement. Requests for reimbursement of a single expense can be submitted at any time. If you intend to request reimbursement for multiple expenses throughout the year, your initial request must estimate what your total reimbursable expenses will be.

Grantees must retain and be prepared to provide documentation for each member for whom reasonable accommodation grant funds are requested. The documentation must show that:

- The goods or services needed to provide the reasonable accommodation were procured in conformance with the procurement standard specified in 2 C.F.R. 200.317 – 200.326; and
- Verification by the member that the accommodation was provided.

To submit an application:

Please send an email to Stephanie Houghton, Training & Support Manager, at stephanie.houghton@tn.gov that contains the information listed below. This information must be in a Word document in order to comply with Section 508 requirements:

- Name of Organization (consistent with the name of your organization in eGrants)
- Organization's contact person for request: Name, telephone number, and email address
- Type of disability for which an accommodation has been provided
- Type of accommodation for which reimbursement requested

- A statement of how the accommodation helps the member achieve full participation in their service assignment(s)
- The amount of reimbursement being requested
- A statement of whether this is a one-time request or a quarterly request for multiple reimbursements.

You must also attach to the email your documentation of the claimed reimbursement, such as copies of a contract and/or invoice and evidence of payment of the expense. This documentation does not need to be in a Section 508 compliant format.

NOTE: Do not include Personally Identifying Information (PII) in your request.

NOTE: Submission of this application for reasonable accommodation grant funds serves as a certification by the Grantee that the AmeriCorps member for whom the accommodation funds are sought has a disability as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). (“A person has a disability if they have a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.”)

You are not required to obtain documentation that the service member has a disability if the disability is apparent.

You should obtain documentation from a medical or rehabilitation expert to better understand the need for the reasonable accommodation for service member requests where a disability is non-apparent or the accommodation request is not straightforward. These professionals can also verify that someone meets disability status.

Resources for Finding Reasonable Accommodations:

The process of selecting the accommodation should be an interactive collaboration between the AmeriCorps member, his or her supervisor, and program managers. Free technical assistance regarding disability accommodation is available through the Job Accommodation Network: www.askjan.org

Many individuals with disabilities may be clients of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, an agency that exists in each state, dedicated to training and supporting people with disabilities in search of gainful employment. It is worth exploring whether the member you are arranging accommodations for has a rehabilitation plan or whether they have access to equipment and services through Vocational Rehabilitation because of their affiliation with the agency. www.tennessee.gov/humanservices/topic/vocational-rehabilitation

Each state also has an Assistive Technology program which can assist with information and referral, loan, and technical assistance questions. <http://tn.gov/humanservices/topic/ttap>

Team Tennessee AmeriCorps Disability Disclosure Form



Dear AmeriCorps Member,

Team Tennessee AmeriCorps is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to ensure that all members are provided full access to the programs with which they serve. Members with disabilities, who require accommodations or whose medical condition may affect their service, are encouraged to identify these needs by completing this form and returning it to the program director.

Please note that **completion of this form is not mandatory** but is helpful for your AmeriCorps program to plan and assist you in having the best service year possible. The disclosed information will remain confidential to the program director. If you wish to disclose a disability to other AmeriCorps team members, you may do so at your discretion.

If, for any reason, you are unable to complete this form, you may bring it to the attention of the program director for further assistance. This form can also be provided in alternative formats upon request.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Is there any disadvantage to disclosing a disability?

Team Tennessee AmeriCorps welcomes disability information and sees it as a way of broadening the understanding of an applicant's capabilities. When requesting formal consideration of a disability, the documentation is kept in a confidential manner, and specific diagnostic information is not shared. Disability disclosure information is used to shed light on an individual's strengths, not to pinpoint areas of weakness.

What role does disclosure have with my AmeriCorps service?

Disclosure simply helps the program director in ensuring that you have the best service experience possible. It also makes the request and implementation of any reasonable accommodations as quick and easy as possible.

Is documentation of a disability required?

If you require any accommodations, be prepared to provide documentation of your condition from a qualified medical professional at the time of your request. This helps programs document the need for any expenditures required.

Member Name _____

Please describe the nature of your disability: _____

Please identify accommodations, if any, which are necessary for you to complete service activities. If you are unsure of what accommodations may be available, please discuss with your program director: _____

Please list an individual (name, relationship, address, and phone number) you would like for us to contact in case of an emergency: _____

Please provide any additional information related to your disability or medical condition that you think may be useful: _____



National Service Inclusion Project: Fact Sheet

Reasonable Accommodations and the Law

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA requires Employers/organizations to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified employees/service members with disabilities upon request.

The law states that a request for accommodations can come at any time, verbally, or in writing.

A Reasonable Accommodation is an adjustment to a service position, the service environment, or the way things are usually done that enables a qualified individual with a disability to complete the application process, perform essential service functions, or enjoy equal access to benefits and privileges of service.

Some examples:

- Providing a flexible schedule for someone who has a condition which prohibits them for working more than six hours at a time.
- Allowing an individual who cannot access an office because of physical barriers to telecommute (i.e. the office does not have an elevator).
- Installing a strobe fire alarm in the office of an individual who is deaf.
- Providing print materials in alternative format (Braille, electronic) to someone who is blind.



The National Service Inclusion Project

www.serviceandinclusion.org

nsip@umb.edu

888-491-0326 (voice/TTY)